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American Psalm

Dean Rader

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American Psalm

DEAN RADER

Give me the sheriff star pinned to the mermaid
and that tiny piece of wood from your throat.
Give me the saw blade, the plastic cat's eye.
Give me the flash drive of your tongue:

I want to save everything. Even the goat horns
you strapped to the skull of that little girl,
and yes, both of her hands. No, I don't really
know what that means, but so what?

I'll take the boneyard and all its yellow flowers,
I'll take the pisspot, the necklace of petal fire,
and while I'm at it, I'll take the body's wafer:
I'll take whatever breaks down beneath its own sad weight—

whether it's this life or a bad party. Your tangy
pelt, your twitch. You want my sandwich,
hey, get in line. This isn't the Army, but I'll march.
I want your shoulder holster. I want your mouth of bullets.